Plainwell Time Critical Removal Action

Paul Bucholtz (MDEQ), was on site to provide input into the bank erosion issues and to provide oversight of excavation activities being conducted at the former Plainwell Mill. During oversight act ivies and area of erosion was identified on the north bank of the river. Based on observations, MDEQ conducted a recon of Removal Area 4A.

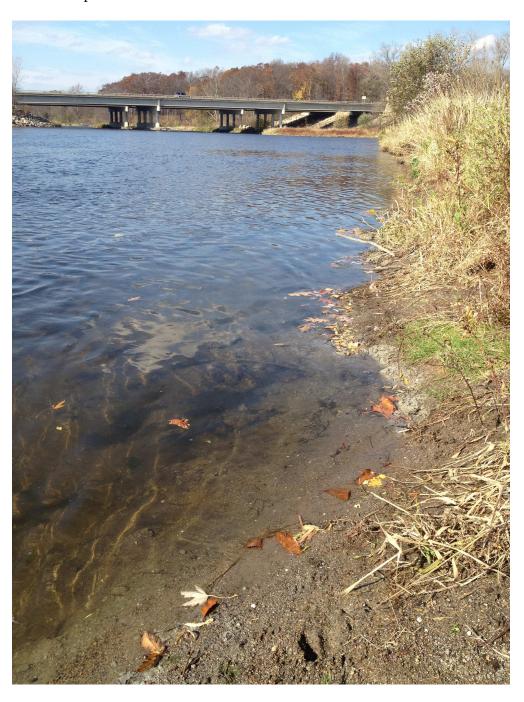
Removal Area 4A

Three pictures are attached which document the observed conditions.

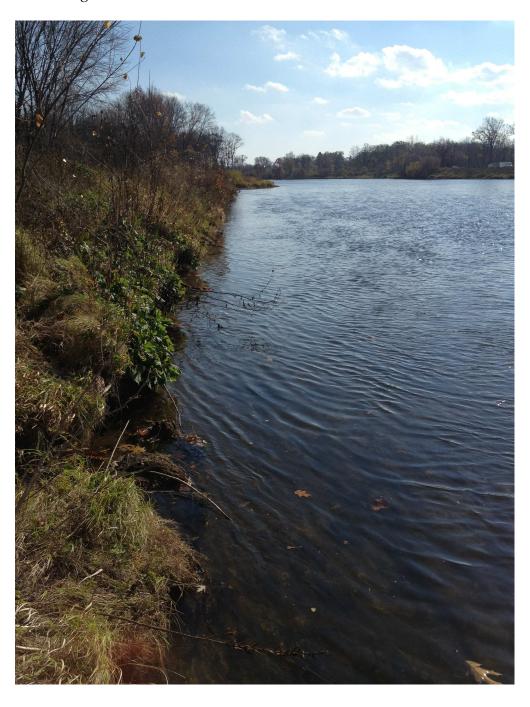
Contaminated residuals are actively being eroded in this area as depicted below.



The area of observed bank erosion is upstream of the U.S. 131 bridge, with the relative location depicted below.



The relative length of the affected bank appears to extend up stream, to the end of the adjacent bank that was armored with river run rock, which can be seen toward the top of the image below.



The erosion appears to be associated with areas of exaction along the north bank upstream of U.S. 131. In these areas, removal activities resulted in excavation to an elevation below the surface water elevation. As such, excavated areas became inundated during normal flows. At the time of excavation, the shallow shelf that remained contained only a few inches of water. The majority of water flow, was held away from the bank, by the shallow shelf. (at Plainwell Dam #2, excavated areas were backfilled to mitigate the inundation of the excavated areas) At the time, it was envisioned that the shallow shelf may vegetate and stabilize. Use of choir logs on the shelf, to help divert flow, induce deposition, and encourage plat growth, was discussed but it was decided that such measures would not be implemented. It is apparent that the material that once made up the shallow shelf has eroded, water depths have increased, and higher energy flow is now present directly along the bank. Active erosion of the unexcavated, contaminated floodplain material is now evident. At the time of the site visit, specific measurements of the eroding bank were not recorded. Follow up evaluation will be necessary to define the area, and determine if other such areas of erosion exist. The general area of erosion is identified by the red polygon in the attached Figure.

